

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method of delivering a component to the colon of an animal comprising:
coating the component with a fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate; and
orally administering the coated component to the animal.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate is fructan.
3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the fructan has an average degree of polymerization in the approximate range of 2 to 60.
4. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the fructan has an average degree of polymerization in the approximate range of 2 to 20.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the fructan has an average degree of polymerization in the approximate range of 2 to 10.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate is fructo-oligosaccharide.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate is neosugar.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the component is one or more of a mineral, vitamin, drug, bacteria, yeast, immune stimulator, nutrient, nutraceutical, electrolyte, chelated mineral, mold, enzyme, energy-providing compound, antibody, or acid.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the component is bacteria from the genus *Lactobacillus* or *Bifidobacterium*.
10. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the component is a nutraceutical.
11. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the component is an enzyme.
12. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the component is an immune stimulator.
13. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the component is a drug.
14. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate is utilized as an energy source by *Bifidobacterium* species, but not by *Salmonella* species.
15. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate is utilized as an energy source by *Lactobacillus* species, but not by *Escherichia coli*.
16. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the coating step comprises applying powdered fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate with a liquid to form a thin film coating on the component.
17. (Original) The method of claim 16 further comprising repeating the step of applying the powdered fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate and liquid to achieve a multi-layered coating.
18. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the coating step comprises combining the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate with a liquid to form a mixture and atomizing and spraying the mixture on the component to form a thin film coating on the component.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18 further comprising repeating the step of applying the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate and liquid mixture to achieve a multi-layered coating.
20. (Original) The method of claim 1 comprising coating the component with fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate and one or more flavoring agent.
21. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the component is a bacteria.
22. (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein the bacteria is from the genus *Lactobacillus* or *Bifidobacteria*.
23. (Original) A coated component made in accordance with the method of claim 1.
24. (Original) A method of delivering a component to the colon of an animal comprising:
coating the component with one or more prebiotics; and
orally administering the coated component to the animal.
25. (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein the prebiotic is a fructose-based oligosaccharide, peptide, protein, or lipid that is not digested or absorbed in a stomach or small intestine, but is fermented by bacteria present in the colon.
26. (Original) The method of claim 24 comprising coating the component with a mixture of two or more prebiotics.
27. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein one of the prebiotics is fructo-oligosaccharide.
28. (Original) The method of claim 24 comprising coating the component with a mixture of one or more prebiotic and one or more flavoring agent.

29. (Original) The method of claim 24 wherein the component is one or more of a mineral, vitamin, drug, bacteria, yeast, immune stimulator, nutrient, nutraceutical, electrolyte, chelated mineral, mold, enzyme, energy-providing compound, antibody, or acid.
30. (Original) A composition for colon-targeted delivery comprising:
one or more components to be delivered to the colon; and
a fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate coating surrounding the component.
31. (Original) The composition of claim 30 wherein the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate is fructo-oligosaccharide.
32. (Original) The composition of claim 30 wherein the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate is inulin.
33. (Original) The composition of claim 30 wherein the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate is neosugar.
34. (Original) The composition of claim 30 wherein the coating further comprises a flavor enhancing agent.
35. (Original) The composition of claim 30 wherein the component is one or more of a mineral, vitamin, drug, bacteria, yeast, immune stimulator, nutrient, nutraceutical, electrolyte, chelated mineral, mold, enzyme, energy-providing compound, antibody, or acid.
36. (Original) The composition of claim 35 wherein the component is one or more beneficial bacteria from the genus *Lactobacillus* or *Bifidobacteria*.
37. (Original) A composition for colon-targeted delivery comprising:
one or more components to be delivered to the colon; and
a coating of one or more prebiotics surrounding the component, wherein at least one of the prebiotics is a fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate.

38. (Original) A method of masking the flavor of a component to be administered orally to an animal comprising coating the component with combination of a fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate and a flavoring agent.
39. (Original) The method of claim 38 wherein the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate is fructo-oligosaccharide, inulin, or neosugar.
40. (Original) A method of enhancing the flowability of a component comprising coating the component with a fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate.
41. (Original) The method of claim 40 wherein the fructose-based non-digestible carbohydrate is fructo-oligosaccharide, inulin, or neosugar.
42. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein at least one of the prebiotics is a soya oligosaccharide.
43. (New) The method of claim 42 wherein the soya oligosaccharide is stachyose.
44. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein at least one of the prebiotics is lactulose.
45. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein at least one of the prebiotics is a galactooligosaccharide.
46. (New) The composition of claim 37 wherein one of the prebiotics is a soya oligosaccharide.
47. (New) The composition of claim 46 wherein the soya oligosaccharide is stachyose.
48. (New) The composition of claim 37 wherein one of the prebiotics is lactulose.

49. (New) The composition of claim 37 wherein one of the prebiotics is a galactooligosaccharide.